

Hardness and Brokenness of Heart.

The broken heart, of which so much is said in Scripture, is the opposite of a hard heart. The hardness of heart expresses insensibility or unsusceptibility of Divine impressions. That heart is hard, that is immovable under the unfolding of the thrilling themes of the Gospel revelation—that can hear of its own lost and ruined condition—of its guilt and condemnation—of the love and sacrifice of Christ—of the consequences of sin and impenitence—of the tremendous retributions before us—and hear without emotion or an anxious thought. That heart is hard, that so resists the work of the Holy Spirit, as to take little or no impression from it—so that in all its contact with the means of grace, through which God is wont to dispense his Spirit—in all the application of Divine truth to the mind, no movings of the Spirit are felt. He has a hard heart, who can listen to the faithful preaching of the Word, year after year, and never have his conscience disturbed, his fears alarmed, nor his affections moved.

The broken and contrite heart is the opposite of this. *Contrite*, in its etymology, expresses that which is reduced to powder, by a pestle and mortar. What had been a hard and unimpressible lump, has by pounding and trituration come to be soft and yielding to the slightest touch. This is made a similitude of the broken and contrite heart.

A broken heart, is a heart stripped of all self-flatteries and excuses, in which sin had fortified its dominion—broken as to its self-righteous confidence—broken away from delusive hopes—broken as to its pride and rebellion—broken as to its rocky hardness, and made sensitive to the truth and Spirit of God—tender and trembling at God's Word—patient under the rod, self-abasing and self-denying, and truly penitent.

A heart truly pulverised, never again returns to the hardness of a stone. Before, the sinner had set up himself as the great object to which all things else must bow. But now, he so sees the excellent glory of God, and the littleness, baseness and meanness of himself, that he desires to shrink to nothing before the Eternal All. The lower he can come in his estimation of himself, and the higher he can exalt his conceptions of God, the happier he is. Indeed, this breaking of the pride of the heart, carried to perfection, forms a prime ingredient in the bliss of heaven. Yea, the joy of heaven must very much consist in a confession, repeated every moment, that before God we are nothing—a bubble raised from nothing by the Creator's breath, and reducible to nothing at his will. The soul of a pardoned sinner is fitted for heaven, by a perpetual bruising of the pride of the heart, by being naturalised to humiliations and self-abasements. It is brought to glory through a series of self-denials, and mortifications, till it comes to feel it to be a delight, to vanish into nothing before God, to shrivel up to a mere point, before the immensity and far-spreading glory of Jehovah. Self now gives place, that God may take it—hides away, that God's glory may shine forth. God delights to have a world of creatures—the world of new creatures in Christ especially—hanging upon his arm, as the great support of a falling creation—the root and spring of life. And he has made the blessedness of the humble soul to consist, in rendering to God the honor, in losing himself in God—swallowed up in an overcoming sense of God's all-sufficient fulness. Here is the end and perfection of the broken heart. For this it is, that to that man will God look, who is of a broken and contrite heart, and that trembleth at his word—that in traversing this earth, and fixing his estimate upon men according to characters, he passes by the rich, the great and the learned—he passes by equally the door of the palace and the cottage, to fix his residence in the heart of the contrite ones. For this the Lord of the highest heavens dwells in the lowest hearts. Among all possible attainments then, there is none so desirable as that of the broken heart.—*Puritan Recorder*.

Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ.

It were good sometimes in our thoughts to compare the abasement of Christ and his exaltation together; to set them, as it were in columns one over against the other. He was born in a stable but now reigns in his royal palace; then he had a manger for his cradle, but now he sits on a chair of state; then oxen and asses were his companions, now thousands of saints, and ten thousand thousands of angels minister round his throne; then, in contempt,

they called him the carpenter's son, now he obtains by inheritance a more excellent name than the angels; "For to which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?" Then he was led away into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, now it is proclaimed before him "Let all the angels of God worship him;" then he had not a place to lay his head on, now he is exalted to be the heir of all things; in his state of humiliation he endured the contradiction of sinners, in his state of exaltation he is adored and admired of saints and angels; then he had "no form or comeliness, when we saw him there was no beauty that we should desire him," now the beauty of his countenance shall send forth such glorious beams, that shall dazzle the eyes of all the celestial inhabitants round about him; once he was the shame of the world, now the glory of heaven, the delight of his Father, the joy of all the saints and angels; once he was the object of the reprobate's scorn and the devil's malice, now they shall be the objects of his most righteous vengeance; he shall speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure; he that was called the deceiver, shall now be adored as the amen of the Father, the faithful and true Witness; a man of sorrows then, but now the mirror of glory, Prince of Peace; then accounted a servant of servants, now he shall be called the Lord of lords, the King of kings; then they put upon him a mock robe, but now he shall be "clothed with a royal garment down to the foot, girt about the paps with a golden girdle; the feeble reed shall now be turned into a massive sceptre of gold; his cross of wood into a throne of glory, and the crown of thorns into a crown of stars. In the day of his abasement he was the butt and scorn of his enemies, spoken against by every profane fool, but now in the days of his exaltation, his enemies shall be made his footstool; yea, thrones and principalities being made subject unto him; surely the very prints of his hands and his feet, and the hole that was pierced in his side, shall be so many signal marks and trophies of victory, and Thomas, set now above all doubting, may sing in triumph, "My Lord and my God." And lastly, the Lord Jesus himself instead of his desertion, the lowest step of all his abasement, shall so lace himself forever in the vision and fruition of his Father and of the blessed Spirit and instead of "My Lord and my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" he shall triumph, "I and my Father are one; thou, Father in me, and I in thee."

Obligation and Inability.

The doctrines of grace do not, in the view of Dr. Chalmers, interpose any obstacles in the way of pressing upon the sinner his immediate obligation to repent and believe the gospel. The following extract from a letter to a beloved friend, will be read with profit both by ministers and people.

"I am, perhaps, on the matter of man's natural inability, and of God's absolute and irreversible ordinations, as high a Calvinist as any acquaintance you have; yet I think that I can perceive the consistency of this with the most free, and urgent, and practical earnestness, not merely in proposing to sinners the overtures of reconciliation, but in beseeching their acceptance of them. The freezing speculation which would forbid this, seems to me at variance with all apostolical example. Look to the burning earnestness of Peter's address, when he entreated the Jews to 'save themselves,' to 'repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out.' It is not the indicative but the imperative mood which he makes use of. It is not a mere didactic exposition of the way by which we are saved, but it is a practical call on those men whom he addresses to betake themselves to that way. And it marks strikingly the harmony which there is between the doctrine of God's sovereignty, on the one hand, and the duty of His ministers on the other, to address themselves to the hopes and the fears, and all the active principles of man's nature—that, as the result of Peter's exhortation, 'three thousand were added to the church of such as should be saved,' meaning, no doubt, by those who would be saved, the 'as many as were ordained to eternal life,' and of whom it is said in another place, when the word was addressed to them, that they believed."

"The natural ability of man to accept the offers of the gospel no more supersedes the duty of the offerer, than the impotency of the withered hand superseded the command of our Saviour that it should be stretched forth.—

Power was given in this instance along with the command, and it is given still along with the preaching of the gospel. Do, my dear sir, continue to preach it freely, universally, urgently. It is well that you feel the impotency of the preacher's voice. But the inference from this is not that you are to chill, in obedience to any worthless dogma, the warmth and earnestness of your preaching; but it is that to preaching you must add prayer.—Throw yourself upon God for the success of all your ministrations, while you suffer nothing to blunt the force or the fervor of these ministrations, and he will add the efficacy of His Spirit to the testimony of His word."

Prayer and Effort.

This attempt to engage men in praying for objects in behalf of which they cannot be brought to labour, is vain. Prayer may lead to effort, or effort may lead to prayer. And prayer when it leads to effort, will become more constant and fervent; and effort when it leads to prayer, will become more energetic and unwearied. So it is found that those who have put forth almost superhuman efforts in the cause of Christ, have breathed the breath of prayer; and they who have been characterized as men of prayer, have been no less distinguished for their efforts. Paul, who had upon him daily, "the care of all the churches," remembered those churches "in every prayer of his;" and his "heart's desire and prayer for Israel" being such that he bore them in his heart as "a great sorrow and a continual heaviness," he labored, first of all, in every place, for their conversion.

And at this day as the lives of men approach the most nearly to a continual self-denial for the sake of Christ, will they be found giving themselves the more earnestly to prayer that "his will may be done on earth as it is in heaven." There is no parade of this. You may not always hear it in public; but go into his family who is a living example of what it is to "count himself no longer his own, but His who died for him," and unite with him day after day in his devotions; and you will cease to wonder, that while others are laboring to hoard up wealth, he bestows his gains with a liberal hand on whatever may promote the Redeemer's kingdom.

On the other hand, the man who does not labour for an object, is not found praying for it. It may have indeed a place in his petitions. This may spring from a sense of what is becoming, or from frequently hearing it in the prayers of others; but what a wearisome sameness there is, as the coldly uttered request comes along in an unvarying place and connection, and is plainly an act of the memory and not of the heart.

Prayer and effort then must not be sundered. If we would pray more, we must labour more; and if we would labour more, we must pray more. If we would bring others to pray more for the blessings of God on any enterprise, we must engage them in earnest labours to carry it forward; and if we would have their labours for it still more abundant, we must lead them on to a more frequent and fervent remembrance of it in their prayers. It is this reciprocal action of prayer and effort, each growing stronger, and the two in their combined influence becoming irresistible, that is now needed, as the human instrumentality, for the conversion of the world.—*Journal of Missions*.

A Living Word.

The word of God is quick and powerful whenever the heart quickened by the Spirit of God is in a state to take its proper force. Said an aged and mature Christian to his minister,—"you preached a few Sabbaths ago from these words, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,' &c. When you spoke of peace with God, it thrilled me. I felt that I had that peace then, and that I had had it many years."

Here is an instance of the word becoming a living word, or word of Life, when uttered in the hearing of one whose heart is opened by the Spirit of God, to apprehend its proper force. Perhaps the preacher when he uttered that word—*peace with God*, was aware of no special emotions corresponding to it in his own mind. Perhaps not another person in the assembly entered into its proper signification. But here was one heart that was thrilled by what seemed a common-place expression to others. There was a boundless force and richness of meaning in that phrase; for the mind by long experience had known a peace with God which passed all understanding

And to that mind the phrase conveyed a boundless sea of glorious thought, which came rushing in with thrilling and overwhelming power.

We see in this what is needful to our coming under the power of the truth—that is, a heart whose experience of the things spoken, or whose aptitude to take an impression is such as in the case referred to. The Spirit of God moving on the heart of one who has been, a stranger to the truth, may make it susceptible of such impressions, after the manner that Christian experience had made that aged saint's heart susceptible. And this it is that makes the word thrill in the minds of those who before had heard it without a thought or care. Thus the Lord was said to open the heart of Lydia, that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul. Thus it is our hardness of heart, our inaptness to impressions from the truth, that prevents our being interested and profited under any preaching of the truth—even by the weakest of God's ministers. For if that single phrase—*peace with God*—could thrill the heart, what evangelical sermon did we ever hear, that had not thoughts and phrases in abundance that were equally thrilling?

Sending Money to Heaven.

It was proposed to construct a plank road through a certain part of the country, and the question was, who would furnish the funds. A few who were interested in the project met together to consult respecting it. The names of the men of property who lived in a village through which the road was expected to pass, were called over, and the probable amount of stock each would take was set down opposite his name.

"There is Mr. Lewis," said Mr. Olds, "we haven't his name down. He is a liberal man, and will do something. How much shall we put him down for?"

"I do not think he will take any stock, in fact I do not think he is able to," said Mr. Hine.

"Not able to! He gave fifty dollars to a western college last spring, to my certain knowledge."

"He has nothing but the small place he lives on, and one would think that would hardly support his family."

"He must have some money at interest."

"I heard him say he had not a cent, and his word is as good as specie in any matter."

"He does not try to lay up any thing then. If he laid up what he gives away, he would have something to live on when he becomes too old to work."

"He sends his money to heaven for safe keeping," said Mr. Green, "and I am not sure but that he is more than half right. I have lost full half of all the money I ever lent."

Mr. Green did not deem it necessary to inform his friends, that a large portion of his losses were occasioned by his violating the laws of the land by taking unlawful and exorbitant interest.

"I believe that Lewis really thinks that all he gives away is safely invested, lent to the Lord, as he calls it, and will be forthcoming when he wants it," said Mr. Hine.

"That must be a very comfortable feeling," said Mr. Green, "I wish I could have it."

It is true that Mr. Lewis did think that all he gave away was safely invested, and that he was, in consequence, far more secure against want in old age than if he had invested on bond and mortgage, the sums given away. Was he in error? Or was his course justified by the express declarations of Almighty God? Is it not true that he that giveth to the poor lendeth unto the Lord, who will repay it in his own good time? Is it not true, that God will withhold no good thing from those that walk uprightly? Is it not true, that property may be so employed here as to increase our treasures in heaven? If so, was not Mr. Lewis a truly wise man?—*N. Y. Observer*.

CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE—extends to all things, inward as well as outward; to the due government of every thought and affection. Sour godliness, so called, is of the devil. Of true Christian godliness it may be said,

"Mild, sweet, serene, and tender in her mood,
Nor grave from sternness, nor from lightness free,
Against example resolutely good,
Fervent in zeal and warm in charity."—*Wesley*.

THOUGHT OF DEATH—We should willingly keep in view an enemy we must meet. Away with the wisdom of the world, that tries every expedient to keep death out of sight. It may be called presumption or vanity, but not